

★ GREAT RECORDINGS OF THE CENTURY ★

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# THE YOUNG GIGLI

*Arias from  
Italian Opera*



COLH 146

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*. . . Les plus hauts chefs-d'œuvre  
du génie de l'homme reposent désormais  
à l'abri de la mort dans quelques disques,  
lourds de secrets spirituels, qu'un enfant de  
trois ans peut tenir dans ses petites mains.*

MAURICE MAETERLINCK

From a foreword to the programme of the Columbia  
reception at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in 1928

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**THE  
YOUNG GIGLI**

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RECORDED BY  
THE GRAMOPHONE COMPANY LIMITED, ENGLAND





BENIAMINO GIGLI  
as Turiddu in *Cavalleria Rusticana*

## GIGLI AT THE OUTSET OF HIS CAREER

By Rodolfo Celletti

Beniamino Gigli belonged to a generation of Italian tenors the best of whom enjoyed sensational early success and an exceptionally swift rise to fame. Such were Bernardo de Muro, Martinelli, Lauri-Volpi, and also Giulio Crimi and Dino Borgioli. At the beginning of his career, Gigli was no less fortunate. In point of fact, he encountered his greatest difficulties before his début, when he left Recanati, where he was born on March 20th, 1890, for Rome to take up singing. Before entering the Santa Cecilia Academy in 1911 he suffered serious hardship because of his family's extreme poverty. Nor were the next few years entirely free from worries. But once Gigli had made his début (in *La Gioconda* at the Teatro Sociale, Rovigo, October 15th, 1914) his problems abated, and within six years he had sung in the principal Italian, Spanish and South American theatres; he reached the Metropolitan, New York, on November 20th, 1920 (in *Mefistofele*), and remained there until 1932.

The present record retraces the path he followed from Rovigo to New York and consists of recordings made in 1918 and 1919—possibly the most fascinating part of his career.

\* \* \*

To turn back the clock half a century and hear the voice of the young Gigli is—if one wishes to be sentimental—rather like discovering him all over again. More important is the fact that we can reconstruct the beginnings and the cause of a success which eventually made him as universally popular as Caruso himself. Of course, a voice of rare beauty and a keen musical sense almost invariably go a long way; but in the early years Beniamino Gigli, though not yet the great Gigli—"the people's songster" as he used to be called in the jargon of the Fascist régime—represented for the Italian public a type of tenor who seemed to have vanished after Caruso settled in the United States. And it was Caruso who immediately sprang to mind, but Caruso as the Italians remembered him, the meltingly tender, sensuous *tenore di grazia*, master of the languid sigh—not the dramatic, declamatory Caruso with a new



dark, baritone quality in his voice who in 1915, after an absence of 12 years, faced somewhat puzzled Milanese and Roman audiences in a few performances of *Pagliacci*.

Yet to see in the young Gigli only a reincarnation of the young Caruso was too simple and convenient a way of assessing him. I should prefer to say that after twenty-five years of *verismo* which had hardened and coarsened so many tenors' voices by demanding absurdly high tessituras, raucous bawling and a form of uncouth, provincial *Sprechgesang*, Gigli displayed not only a great voice, but great singing, too.

Moreover, he took the stage with a clearly-defined personality and gifts that unmistakably distinguished him as a tenor capable of expressing the passion of love at its warmest and most ecstatic, just as romantic melodrama conceived it. It is easy to see how the aria "Cielo e mar" from *La Gioconda* was so enormously effective as sung by Gigli, not only at his début in Rovigo, but also a month later at the Teatro Verdi in Ferrara, early in 1915 at the Carlo Felice of Genoa; then in Barcelona in 1917, at the Teatro Costanzi of Rome in 1917-1918 and at the Colon, Buenos Aires in the summer of 1919. This record reveals a delicious timbre, extraordinarily compact and homogeneous tonal quality, fluid delivery and a clean, easy attack—virtues unheard in Italy since Caruso and Bonci sang as young men. The very opening phrase ("Cielo e mar") conveys the idea of amplitude, ocean horizons, endless space. But there is a precise technical reason for this marvellous effect. The *mezza-voce* of Italian "tenori di grazia" of the old school was based on the same disposition of the vocal organs, considered as points of resonance, as that employed in a full tonal emission. The result was a beautifully mellow sound, ethereal yet substantial, capable of rising above the orchestra in the largest theatres, as if floating in mid-air over the auditorium.

Caruso, between 1897 and 1903, and Angelo Masini before him, had exploited this gift to the full, and Gigli followed suit. Throughout his long career he used it with unerring skill, even though, for more or less adequate reasons of vocal economy, he sometimes resorted to falsetto. But in his first series of records, he employed almost exclusively a pure *mezza-voce* with the velvet smoothness and flexibility of a virtuoso. Notice also in "Cielo e mar", at the end of the first verse, the ease and polish of the gruppetto on "o sogni d'or" and the following G natural.

If the underlying mood of the aria is one of expectancy as the

hero awaits his beloved, and of a languorous reverie, which Gigli's golden timbre renders to perfection, the end builds up to a passionate climax, a crescendo of erotic desire calling for maximum vocal resources. And this brings us to another of the young Gigli's gifts—his ability to increase volume without the slightest effort or loss of timbre. This characteristic is even better illustrated in the duet "Enzo Grimaldo" with Barnaba, sung here by the baritone Zani. Note, for instance, the bite and ring suddenly acquired by Gigli's voice in exclamations such as "Oh giubilo! Oh giubilo! Oh, Laura!" or "Oh Laura mia! Oh Laura mia!"—not to mention the ease with which the highest notes are sustained.

A third characteristic: impeccable management of the breath, resulting equally in the fullness and rounded quality of the notes, and in the play of legato and portamento. The passage "Deh non tremar" is a typical example, for here phrases like: "Quando sarà corcata all'aura bruna" or "Coi baci in fronte e colle vele al vento" are magnificently shaped with a truly miraculous homogeneity of intensity and colour.

Lastly there is the tenor's exceptionally clear diction. Some of the keener Italian critics have hastened to point out that Gigli, even at the peak of his career, was sometimes guilty of slight mispronunciations (for example, in *Rigoletto* he would sing: "La donna è mobile" for "La donna è mobile" and in *Ballo in Maschera* "E tu m'appronta un abbito [for "abito"] da pescator!" At times his mode of pronunciation was a little vulgar and colloquial, which scarcely helped when it came to portraying Verdi's more aristocratic characters. Still, his diction was always limpidly clear whatever he sang.

This, then, was Gigli's vocal personality in the early years. The three excerpts from *La Gioconda* reflect it faithfully and also demonstrate his remarkable powers of expression and interpretation as a lyric tenor with a deft—though instinctive—command of dynamics.

\* \* \*

After Ponchielli's opera, Gigli turned to *Tosca*—first at Genoa in the winter of 1915, about the same time at the Teatro Massimo, Palermo, and then at the San Carlo, Naples in 1915–1916, at the Costanzi, Rome in 1917–1918, at the Monte Carlo opera and the Colon, Buenos Aires in 1919. His "Recondita armonia" is particularly outstanding for its smooth line as well as shrewd



management by the singer. Notice how Gigli, to cope with the difficult tessitura at the end, rests his voice by a lighter touch to the phrase "Ma nel ritrar costei il mio solo pensier".

The control of vocalist over interpreter is readily discernible in Cavaradossi's farewell to life which in later years Gigli was to sing more passionately and more extravertly, though not without lapsing into vulgarity. In this performance, particularly enchanting are the *smorzando* phrases of the opening bars, while no voice in the last forty years has instilled such aching nostalgia and honeyed charm into the words "O dolci baci, o languide carezze".

In *Mefistofele*, on the other hand, we find that the interpreter grows in stature. Still not entirely at ease in music of very high tessitura, and much more concerned with perfection and lightness of tone than he was to be ten or fifteen years later, Gigli at the time of these recordings was especially fond of Boito's opera in which the role of Faust fitted him, vocally, like a glove. He sang it for the first time at the Teatro Massimo in Palermo in 1915 and gave a whole series of performances, making his *début* in this opera at the San Carlo (December 1915), in Rome (December 1916), in Madrid (spring, 1917) at La Scala (December 1918) and, as already mentioned, at the Metropolitan, New York.

The delicate beginning of "Dai campi dai prati", the rapt, inspired expressiveness of many phrases (such as the *mezza-voce* at the words "Di sacro mister"), the glowing final bars; these amount to something more than colourful singing, they testify to the artist's sensitivity and participation in the role. In the duet "Se tu mi doni" with the bass, Scattola, Gigli attains a still higher level and achieves a gentle sweetness of tone bordering on the mystical.

The same is true of the aria, "Giunto sul passo estremo" which, though perhaps a trifle sluggish towards the end, is sung with rare subtlety and a magnificent crescendo at the words "in un sogno supremo si bea l'anima già".

\* \* \*

With Turiddu's farewell to his mother from *Cavalleria* (an opera which Gigli first sang at the San Carlo, Naples, in December 1915), we reach a genre that can be called "*verismo bel canto*" even though the expression may seem to be self-contradictory. Until the end, the mood of the passage is one of tenderness and affection. It is, of



course, arguable whether such a lyrical interpretation suits Turiddu better than Gigli's more robust characterisation in later recordings of the same excerpt. From the points of view of taste and musicality, however, this version is unquestionably preferable to the others, marred as they are either by moments of forcing or by irritating mannerisms in which Gigli indulged during the latter part of his career (for example, his habit of sobbing indiscriminately).

The same qualities, restraint, perfect control and velvet smoothness—uncommon enough in other tenors—are to be found in “Vedi, io piango” from *Fedora*, while “Amor ti vieta” (definitely “*verismo bel canto*”) is particularly fine for its tonal sweetness and opulence, the perfect balance of colour, intensity and vibrations between phrase and phrase. We are left with the impression that if it were possible to weigh these magnificent spans of sound one by one, the result would be the same in each case. (Gigli's first performances of *Fedora* were at the San Carlo and the Teatro dal Verme, Milan, in December 1919.)

A similar sensation is provided by “Spirto gentil” from *La Favorita*, an opera which Gigli first sang at the Teatro Bellini, Naples, in January 1916 and shortly afterwards at the Teatro Verdi, Padua. This is a true *bel canto* opera where the most delicate and fragile vocal transparencies can easily be ruined by an untidy slur or portamento. Gigli's interpretation is vocally as happy as ever, and leads to an unusual interpretative delicacy; the reprise of “Spirto gentil” is more plaintive, ethereal and emotional than the opening. In this aria the vocal and stylistic difficulties are such that the singer has to exercise the most rigorous breath control, with the result that the present recording, compared with his later version, seems a little cold, particularly in the sections where the betrayed lover expresses his resentment—“Donna sleale in tanto amore” and “Perchè tradirmi”. Still, we should remember that it was customary in *bel canto* singing to sacrifice emotional vigour for beauty of sound and elegance of style; so much is evident from the records of Bonci, Boninsegna, Russ and Battistini.

The other excerpt from *La Favorita*, the first part of the Act 4 duet between Fernando and Leonora (Elvira Casazza), also reflects early nineteenth-century standards of interpretation. Usually, even the most restrained tenors let themselves go in this passage; and Gigli brings much eloquence to the phrase: “Giusto cielo, il mio furore” and executes the G of “Io t'amo” with a finely effective

crescendo. This record shows him as a much more disciplined singer, stylistically speaking, than he was to become later in his career.

\* \* \*

Of all the many acoustic recordings of the serenade from *Iris*, "Apri la tua finestra", this is one of the most important. It is a most difficult piece, for it keeps the voice continually in the most critical part of the tenor range (between high F and G) and furthermore has an orchestral accompaniment which is very trying to the singer's intonation. Great interpretations on record are probably limited to three:—Enrico Caruso for the intensity of his sensuous appeal; Giuseppe Anselmi for his incisive cock-a-hoop arrogance and Gigli for the lyrical and elegiac atmosphere he conjures up. Moreover, the mellowness of his voice and the smoothness of his portamenti approach perfection. Gigli's first appearance in *Iris* was at the Politeama Chiarella, Turin, in February 1917; then at the Coliseo, Buenos Aires, and the Municipal, Rio de Janeiro, in the summer of 1920.

*Lodoletta*, in which Gigli sang for the first time during the summer of 1917 in Leghorn, was, together with *La Gioconda* and *Mefistofele*, the work which contributed most to make his name. His delicately smooth tone and natural sympathy with the sentimental music helped him to a realisation of the tenor role that has never been surpassed. Flammen's aria is sung on this record with the usual vocal fluidity, and is only spoilt at the end by excessive sobbing.

The last item on the record is the finale from Act I of *La Bohème* with Maria Zamboni. Gigli's first Rodolfo was at Monte Carlo in March 1919. Here the freshness of the voice, the variety of dramatic accent and the limitless resources of colour, give to the passage a distinctive flavour. The ringing tone of certain phrases ("Il sogno ch'io vorrei sempre sognar") contrasts with the enchanting sweetness of others ("Treman nell'anima dolcezze estreme"), and the result is gloriously effective. The close of the scene is unusual inasmuch as Gigli resorts to falsetto—a questionable expedient, perhaps, but not entirely inappropriate, given the nature of the passage and the theatrical situation.

*Translated by Gwyn Morris.*

## TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

The English versions—which are line-for-line, and even, so far as possible, word-for-word, are intended solely as a key to the original. Grace has been sacrificed to literalness. Awkward inversions, and phrases which show the construction of the Italian, have been preferred to smoother equivalents.

### SIDE ONE

#### LA GIOCONDA (1876)

Opera in four acts by Amilcare Ponchielli (1834–86): libretto by Tobia Gorrio (Arrigo Boito), based on Victor Hugo's play 'Angelo, tyran de Padoue'.

#### Band 1—Enzo Grimaldo . . . (Act I)

*In seventeenth-century Venice, Barnaba is a spy of the Inquisition. He loves Gioconda, a street ballad-singer, but she loves Enzo, a Genoese noble in disguise. Enzo loves Laura, his former betrothed, who is now the wife of Alvise Badoero, a leader of the Inquisition. Barnaba plans to use Laura as a bait to trap Enzo.*

BARNABA

Enzo Grimaldo, Principe di Santefior, che pensi?

ENZO

(aside)

(Scoperto son.)

BARNABA

Qual magico stupor t'invade  
i sensi?  
Pensi a Madonna Laura d'Alvise Badoèro?

ENZO

Chi sei?

(starting)

BARNABA

So tutto! e penetro in fondo al tuo  
pensiero.  
Avesti culla in Genova . . .

ENZO

Prence non son,  
sui flutti  
Guido un vascel, son dalmato: Enzo  
Giordan . . .

BARNABA

Enzo Grimaldo, Prince of Santafor, what are you thinking about?

ENZO

(I have been discovered.)

BARNABA

What magic numb-  
ness invades your senses?  
Are you thinking of Lady Laura d'Alvise  
Badoero?

ENZO

Who are you?

BARNABA

I know all, and penetrate to  
the bottom of your thoughts.  
Your birthplace was Genoa . . .

ENZO

I am not a  
prince; on the waves  
I captain a ship, I am a Dalmatian, Enzo  
Giordan . . .



BARNABA

(coldly)

Per tutti  
Ma non per me. Venezia t'ha proscritto,  
ma un forte  
Desio qui ancor ti trasse ad affrontar la  
morte.  
Amasti un dì una vergine, là, sul tuo mar  
beato,  
A estranio imene vittima la condannava il  
fato.

ENZO

Ho giurato fede a Gioconda.

BARNABA

La cantatrice

errante  
Ami come sorella, ma Laura come amante.  
Gia disperavi in terra di riveder quel volto,  
Ed or, sotto la maschera l'angelo tuo  
t'apparve . . .  
Ti riconobbe . . .

ENZO

(aside)

(O giubilo! Oh Laura!)

BARNABA

L'amor passa le larve.

Badoero questa notte veglia al dogale ostello  
Col gran Consiglio. Laura sarà sul tuo  
vascello.

ENZO

Dio di pietà!

BARNABA

Le angoscie dell'amor tuo  
soccorro.

ENZO

O Laura mia!

Gran Dio! La togli all'orrida condanna di  
dolore,  
L'idolatrata Laura a me ridona ancor.

BARNABA

Va: corri al tuo desio: spiega le vele in  
mar,

Va. Tutto il trionfo mio negli occhi tuoi  
m'appar.

Ebben?

BARNABA

To everyone

but not to me. Venice banished you, but a  
strong  
desire dragged you here again to face  
death.  
You loved once a maid, there [i.e. in  
Genoa], by your own unhappy sea;  
to be victim of a foreign marriage she was  
condemned by fate.

ENZO

I have sworn to be true to Gioconda.

BARNABA

The

wandering singer  
you love as a sister, but Laura as a mistress.  
You had already despaired of seeing that  
face again on earth,  
and now, behind a mask your angel has  
appeared to you . . .  
She has recognized you . . .

ENZO

(O joy! O Laura!)

BARNABA

Love pierces disguises,

Badoero tonight sits at the Doge's palace  
with the Grand Council. Laura will be on  
your ship.

ENZO

God of mercy!

BARNABA

The anguish of your love I  
lighten.

ENZO

O my Laura!

Great God, save her from the terrible  
punishment of pain,  
My idolized Laura give to me again!

BARNABA

Go, run to your desire; spread your sails at  
sea,  
go. All my triumph in your eyes appears.

Well?

ENZO

A notte bruna sul brigantino aspetto

Laura.

BARNABA

(with a mocking smile)

Buona fortuna!

ENZO

E tu sii maledetto!

[Maledizione!

BARNABA

[Spiega le vele in mar!

ENZO

When the night is dark, on the  
brigantine I shall wait  
for Laura.

BARNABA

Good fortune!

ENZO

And you be damned!

[Damnation!

BARNABA

[Spread your sails at sea!

### Band 2—Cielo e mar ! (Act II)

*Prince Enzo Grimaldo, disguised as a Dalmatian sea captain, has come to Venice; his ship is anchored in the lagoon; he plans to elope with Laura. While awaiting her, he gazes at the starry night.*

ENZO

Cielo e mar !—l'etereo velo  
Splende come un santo altare.  
L'angiol mio verrà dal cielo ?!  
L'angiol mio verrà dal mare ?!  
Qui l'attendo, ardente spira  
Oggi il vento dell'amor.  
Quel mortal che vi sospira  
Vi conquide, o sogni d'or !

Cielo e mar !—per l'aura fonda  
Non appar nè suol, nè monte,  
L'orizzonte bacia l'onda,  
L'onda bacia l'orizzonte !  
Qui nell'ombra ov'io mi giaccio  
Coll'anelito del cor,  
Vieni, o donna, vieni al bacio  
Della vita incantor.

ENZO

Sky and sea !—the ethereal veil  
shines like a holy altar.  
My angel will come from the sky ?  
My angel will come from the sea ?  
Here I await her; ardently breathes  
today the breeze of love.  
That mortal who sighs for you  
wins you, o golden dreams !

Sky and sea !—through the deep air  
appears neither shore nor mountain;  
the horizon kisses the wave,  
the wave kisses the horizon !  
Here in the shadow where I wait  
with a beating heart,  
come, o lady, come to the kiss  
which enchants life.

### Band 3—Deh! non tremar (Act II)

*Laura has duly come on board Enzo's brigantine, and Enzo imagines that they are safe; quite wrongly, as it turns out.*

ENZO

Deh! non tremar!  
Siamo in un'isola tutta deserta,  
Fra mare e cielo, fra cielo e mar!  
Vedrem fra poco tramontar la luna . . .  
Quando sarà corcata, all'aura bruna

Noi salperem;

Coi baci in fronte e colle vele al vento!

ENZO

Come, do not fear;  
we are on a desert island  
between sea and sky, between sky and sea.  
Soon we shall see the moon set . . .  
When the moon has gone to rest, in the dark  
breeze  
we shall weigh anchor,  
with kisses on our brows and sails to the  
wind!

## TOSCA (1900)

Opera in three acts by Giacomo Puccini (1858-1924); libretto by Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica, after Sardou's play.

### Band 4—*Recondita armonia* (Act I)

*Inside a church in Rome, 1800. Cavaradossi is painting a Mary Magdalen, into which he has put the features of a woman he has seen worshipping in the church. He compares these features with those of his mistress, the opera singer Floria Tosca.*

CAVARADOSSI

Recondita armonia  
di bellezze diverse! . . . è bruna Floria,  
l'ardente amante mia,  
e te, beltade ignota, cinta di chiome bionde!

Tu azzurro hai l'occhio . . . Tosca ha  
l'occhio nero!  
L'arte nel suo mistero  
le diverse bellezze insieme confonde:  
ma nel ritrar costei  
il mio solo pensiero  
ah! il mio solo pensiero sei tu! Tosca sei tu!

CAVARADOSSI

Obscure harmony  
of different beauties! . . . Tosca is dark,  
my passionate mistress;  
and you, unknown beauty, crowned with  
fair hair!

You have blue eyes . . . Tosca has  
black eyes!  
Art in its mystery  
the different beauties mixes together:  
but in drawing her  
my only thought,  
ah! my only thought is you! Tosca, is you!

### Band 5—*E lucevan le stelle* (Act III)

*Cavaradossi, awaiting execution on the platform of the Castel Sant'Angelo, has begun to write a farewell letter to Tosca. But after a few lines he loses himself in memories.*

CAVARADOSSI

E lucevan le stelle ed olezzava  
la terra—stridea l'uscio  
dell'orto—e un passo sfiorava la rena.

Entrava ella, fragrante,  
mi cadea fra le braccia.  
Oh! dolci baci, o languide carezze,  
mentr'io fremente  
le belle forme disciogliea dai veli!  
Svanì per sempre il sogno mio d'amore . . .  
L'ora è fuggita  
e muoio disperato! . . .  
E non ho amato mai tanto la vita!

CAVARADOSSI

And there were shining the stars and  
fragrant was  
the earth—there creaked the gate  
of the orchard—and a step lightly trod the  
ground,  
She entered, fragrant,  
fell in my arms.  
Oh! sweet kisses, o languishing caresses,  
while I trembling  
her fair limbs stripped of their veils!  
Vanished for ever is my dream of love . . .  
The time is fled  
and I die despairing! . . .  
And I have never loved life so much!

## MEFISTOFELE (1868)

Opera in four acts with Prologue and Epilogue; words and music by Arrigo Boito (1842-1918), based on Goethe's 'Faust'.

### Band 6—*Dai campi, dai prati* (Act I)

*It is Easter Sunday. Faust has just returned to his study, after walking through the countryside.*

FAUST

Dai campi, dai prati, che inonda  
La notte, dai quieti sentier  
Ritorno, e di pace, di calma profonda  
Son pieno, e di sacro mister.

FAUST

From the fields, from the meadows, which  
night floods over, from the quiet paths  
I return, and with peace, with profound calm  
I am filled, and with sacred mystery.



Le torve passioni del core  
 S'assonnano in placido obbligo,  
 Mi ferve soltanto l'amore  
 Dell'uomo! l'amore di Dio!  
 Ah, dai campi, dai prati ritorno,

E verso l'Evangel mi sento attrattato,  
 M'accingo a meditar.

The grim passions of the heart  
 sink to slumber in peaceful oblivion.  
 There fires me only the love  
 of man! the love of God!  
 Ah, from the fields, from the meadows I  
 return,  
 and towards the Gospel I feel myself drawn;  
 I prepare myself to meditate.

Band 7—Se tu mi doni (Act I)

*Faust agrees that the Devil shall have his soul if Mephistopheles can give him an instant of real happiness on earth.*

FAUST

Se tu mi doni

FAUST

If you give me

Un'ora di riposo  
 In cui s'acqueti l'alma. Se sveli  
 Al mio buio pensier me stesso e il mondo,  
 Se avrien ch'io dica all'attimo fuggente:  
*Arrestati, sei bello! Allor ch'io muoia!*  
 E m'inghiotta l'averno.

an hour of rest  
 in which my soul has peace; if you reveal  
 to my dark mind my self and the world,  
*If it happens that I say to a fleeting moment:*  
*'Stay, you are lovely!' Then let me die.*  
 And let Hell swallow me.

MEFISTOFELE

Sta ben?

MEFISTOFELE

Agreed?

FAUST

Venga il contratto.

FAUST

Let's make the contract.

MEFISTOFELE

Top! È già fatto.

MEFISTOFELE

There! It's done already.

*(they shake hands)*

MEFISTOFELE e FAUST

Fin da stanotte  
 Nell'orgie ghiotte  
 Del mio messere  
 Da cameriere  
 Lo servirò.

MEFISTOFELE and FAUST

From tonight  
 in the greedy orgies  
 of my master  
 as a servant  
 I will wait on him.

Band 8—Rivolgì a me lo sguardo . . . Lontano lontano (Act III)

*Margherita, having been seduced by Faust, has murdered her mother and child and lost her reason. She is in prison when Faust visits her, and for a brief moment they imagine they will be able to escape together to a happier land.*

FAUST

Rivolgì a me lo sguardo!  
 Ah! odi la voce dell'amor che prega!  
 Vieni . . . fuggiam.

FAUST

Turn to me your gaze!  
 Ah! hear the voice of love that begs you!  
 Come . . . let us fly!

MARGHERITA

Sì fuggiamo . . . già

MARGHERITA

Yes, let us fly . . .

sogno  
 Un incantato asil di pace, dove  
 Soavemente uniti ognor vivrem.

already I dream  
 of an enchanted refuge of peace, where  
 happily united we shall live for ever.

FAUST e MARGHERITA  
 Lontano, lontano, lontano  
 Sui flutti d'un ampio oceano,  
 Fra i roridi effluvi del mar,  
 Fra l'alghe, fra i fior, fra le palme,

Il porto dell'intime calme,  
 L'azzurra isoletta m'appar.

M'appare sul cielo sereno  
 Ricinta d'un arcobaleno  
 Specchiante il sorriso del sol.  
 La fuga dei liberi amanti  
 Speranti, migranti, raggianti,  
 Dirige a quell'isola il vol.  
 Lontano, lontano, lontano.

FAUST and MARGHERITA  
 Far away, far away, far away  
 on the waves of a wide ocean,  
 amid the dewy odours of the sea,  
 amid the seaweed, amid the flowers, amid  
 the palms,  
 the port of secret peace,  
 the little blue island appears to me.

It appears to me against the clear sky  
 surrounded by a rainbow  
 reflecting the smile of the sun.  
 The flight of lovers in freedom,  
 hopeful, escaping, radiant,  
 directs to that island its course.  
 Far away, far away, far away.

#### Band 9—Giunto sul passo estremo (Act IV)

*Faust's last day has come. The scene, once again, is his study; the Gospel still lies open on his desk. His thoughts turn towards good works; and it is this repentance which saves his soul.*

FAUST  
 Giunto sul passo estremo  
 Della più estrema età,  
 In un sogno supremo  
 S'è bea l'anima già.  
 Re d'un placido mondo  
 D'una landa infinita,  
 A un popolo fecondo  
 Voglio donar la vita.  
 Sotto una savia legge  
 Vo' che surgano a mille  
  
 A mille e genti e gregge  
 E case e campi e ville.  
 Ah! voglio che questo sogno  
 Sia la santa poesia  
 E l'ultimo bisogno  
 Dell'esistenza mia.

FAUST  
 Having reached the last step  
 of life's final limit,  
 in a supreme dream  
 my soul now delights.  
 King of a peaceful world,  
 of infinite lands,  
 to a prosperous people  
 I wish to give life.  
 Beneath a wise law  
 I wish that there should arise, in  
 thousand  
 upon thousand, people and flocks  
 and houses and fields and towns.  
 Ah! I wish that this dream  
 may be the holy poetry  
 and ultimate need  
 of my existence.

#### SIDE TWO

#### CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA (1890)

Opera in one act by Pietro Mascagni (1863-1945); libretto by Giovanni Targioni-Tozzetti and Guido Menasci, based on a short story by Giovanni Verga.

#### Band 1—Mamma! quel vino è generoso!

*In a Sicilian village in the late nineteenth century. Turiddu bids farewell to his mother Lucia before the duel in which he is killed.*

TURIDDU

Mamma! quel vino è generoso, e certo  
Oggi troppi bicchier ne ho tracannati . . .

vado fuori all'aperto . . .  
ma prima voglio che mi benedite  
come quel giorno che partii soldato . . .  
e poi . . . mamma . . . sentite . . .  
s'io . . . non tornassi . . . voi dovreste  
fare  
da madre a Santa, ch'io le avea giurato

di condurla all'altare.  
Voi dovreste fare  
da madre a Santa s'io non tornassi.

LUCIA

Perchè parli così, figliolo mio?

TURIDDU

Oh nulla . . . È il vino che m'ha suggerito!

M'ha suggerito il vino;  
per me pregate Iddio!  
Un bacio, mamma!  
Un altro bacio, addio!  
S'io non tornassi, fate da madre a Santa!

Un bacio, mamma . . . addio.

TURIDDU

Mother, that wine is strong, and certainly  
today I have gulped down too many glasses  
of it . . .

I am going out into the open . . .  
but first I want you to bless me  
as that day when I went off a soldier . . .  
and then . . . mother . . . listen . . .  
if I . . . should not come back . . . you  
must be  
a mother to Santuzza, because I promised  
her  
to lead her to the altar.  
You must be  
a mother to Santuzza if I should not come  
back.

LUCIA

Why do you speak like this, my son?

TURIDDU

Oh nothing . . . it was the wine that  
prompted me!  
The wine prompted me;  
pray to God for me!  
A kiss, mother!  
Another kiss. Farewell!  
If I should not come back, be a mother to  
Santuzza!  
A kiss, mother . . . farewell.

#### LA FAVORITA (1840)

Opera in four acts by Gaetano Donizetti (1797-1848); libretto (in French) by Alphonse Royer and Gustav Vaëz, based on the drama 'Le Comte de Comminges' by Baculard-d'Arnaud. Italian translation by F. Jannetti.

#### Band 2—Spirto gentil (Act IV)

*A monastery in Castile, 1340. Fernando has returned to monastic life after abandoning Leonora, who had married him only to reveal afterwards that she had previously been the King's mistress. Fernando cannot forget her.*

FERNANDO

Spirto gentil, ne' sogni miei  
Brillasti un dì, ma ti perdei:  
Fuggi dal cor, mentita speme,  
Larve d'amor, fuggite insieme.

A te d'accanto del genitore  
Scordava il pianto, la patria, il ciel—  
Donna sleal! in tanto amore  
Segnasti il core d'onta mortal,  
Ahimè, ahimè!  
Spirto gentil etc.  
Perchè tradirmi, donna sleale?  
Fuggite insieme, larve d'amor.

FERNANDO

Gentle spirit, in my dreams  
you shone one day, but I lost you:  
begone from my heart, false hope,  
illusions of love, begone together.

Beside you I forgot my father's  
tears, my country, and Heaven—  
Disloyal woman! In such great love  
you marked my heart with mortal shame,  
alas! alas!  
Gentle spirit etc.  
Why betray me, disloyal woman?  
Begone together, illusions of love.



Band 3—Addio! fuggir mi lascia (Act IV)

*The final scene of the opera. Leonora has come to the monastery to find Fernando, and at last the lovers are reconciled.*

FERNANDO  
Addio! fuggir mi lascia.

FERNANDO  
Farewell! Let me escape.

LEONORA  
Disarma il tuo furor.

LEONORA  
Control your fury.

FERNANDO  
Addio!

FERNANDO  
Farewell!

LEONORA  
Ma di sì cruda ambascia pietà,  
Del mio dolor pietà, pietà!  
Al mio duol al mio spavento,  
Di conforto un solo accento!

LEONORA  
But on such cruel pain have pity,  
on my sorrow pity, pity!  
For my grief, for my terror,  
of comfort one word only!

FERNANDO  
No!

FERNANDO  
No!

LEONORA  
Per tuo padre fia concesso,  
Per la morte a cui son presso . . .

LEONORA  
For your father's sake concede it,  
for the death to which I am near . . .

FERNANDO  
Va!

FERNANDO  
Go!

LEONORA  
. . . pietà, te ne scongiuro,  
per l'amor de' lieti dì.

LEONORA  
. . . pity, I implore you,  
by the love of our happy days.

FERNANDO  
Ah! giusto ciel, il mio furore  
Come foglia inaridi!

FERNANDO  
Oh! just Heaven! My fury  
like a leaf has withered!

LEONORA  
Tua pietade alfin mi dona,  
O mi spingi nell'avello.  
Ah! Fernando, o mio Fernando  
di me pietà.

LEONORA  
Your pity now at last give me,  
or you will drive me to the grave.  
Ah, Fernando, oh my Fernando  
pity me.

FERNANDO  
Ah! Leonora! Leonora!

FERNANDO  
Ah! Leonora! Leonora!

LEONORA  
Grazie! Grazie!

LEONORA  
Mercy! Mercy!

FERNANDO  
Iddio perdona!

FERNANDO  
God forgives!

LEONORA  
E tu dunque? E tu?

LEONORA  
And you therefore? And you?

FERNANDO

Io t'amo!

Vieni, ah, vien! io m'abbandono  
Alla gioia, all'amor che m'inebria,  
Del mio cor t'è reso il trono,  
Teco allato io vo morir.  
Come lampo sorge all'anima  
Una voce ed un pensiero!  
Ah, fuggi, ascondi al mondo intiero  
La tua vita, il tuo gioir.  
Fuggiam, fuggiamo insieme!

LEONORA

Oh taci! è vana speme!  
Odi tu quel contento?

FERNANDO

Fuggiam!

LEONORA

È il cielo

Che ti parla.

FERNANDO

Fuggiam! in te riposto  
Mio fato è sol, vieni!

LEONORA

Ah, no!

FERNANDO

Vieni!

LEONORA

A Dio ti volgi!

FERNANDO

Or più forte è l'amor!

LEONORA e FERNANDO

Ah! vieni, ah, vieni! io m'abbandono  
Alla gioia, all'amor che m'inebria,  
Del mio cor t'è reso il trono,  
La tua vita, il tuo gioir.

FERNANDO

I love you!

Come, ah, come! I abandon myself  
to joy, to the love that overwhelms me,  
to you is given the throne of my heart,  
united with you I want to die.  
Like lightning, rise in my heart  
one voice and one thought!  
Ah, escape, hide from the whole world  
your life, your happiness.  
Let us escape, let us escape together!

LEONORA

Oh be silent! It is a vain hope!  
Do you hear that chorus?

FERNANDO

Let us escape!

LEONORA

It is Heaven

that speaks to you.

FERNANDO

Let us escape:  
with you alone is my destiny, come!

LEONORA

Ah, no!

FERNANDO

Come!

LEONORA

Turn to God!

FERNANDO

Now love is stronger!

LEONORA and FERNANDO

Come, ah come! I abandon myself  
to joy, to the love that overwhelms me,  
to you is given the throne of my heart,  
your life, your happiness.

### IRIS (1898)

Music by Pietro Mascagni (1863-1945). Libretto by Luigi Illica.

Band 4—Serenata (Apri la tua finestra) (Act I)

*Iris, a little mousmé who lives with her blind father at the foot of Fujiyama, has attracted the attention of Osaka, a rich young libertine whose voice is 'subtle, flexible as a willow', and moreover, in his own account of it, 'a thrilling voice which vibrates in the air, rouses echoes from the mountains, and soars aloft like a stork or falcon'. Osaka sets up a puppet-theatre outside Iris's garden, and himself supplies the voice of Jor, Son of the Sun, who (in the context of the puppet-play) sings the Serenade here recorded. And—in the words of the*

*libretto*—' Iris, the gentle, the good Iris, believes this feigned sweetness ! Silently she deserts the hedge of her garden to approach the theatre, and at the moment when Jor, Son of the Sun, appears to the unhappy Dhia, she is already outside the hedge, far from her blind father'.  
In the whirl of the ensuing geisha dance she is abducted.

#### OSAKA

Apri la tua finestra !—Jor son io  
che vengo al tuo chiamar, povera Dhia !  
Apri la tua finestra al raggio mio !  
Apri il tuo cor a mia calda malia !  
Jor ha ascoltata, o Dhia, la tua  
preghiera !

Apri l'anima tua, fanciulla, al Sole !  
Apri l'anima tua a mie parole !  
Apri il tuo cuore a me, fanciulla, e spera !  
Tu vuoi morir ? Morire io ti farò,  
ma ti farò morir dal Sol baciata,

poscia al paese eterno ti trarrò  
ove, o fanciulla, tu sarai amata.

[Mysterious power of fantasy and of melody !—the voice of the false Jor rises aloft even as the sun, and spreads through all even as the air. The mousmés' hearts beat wildly at this harmony, and they seem to live in it.—Illica's note.]

#### OSAKA

Open thy window !—Jor am I  
who come at thy call, unhappy Dhia !  
Open thy window to my ray !  
Open thy heart to my warm enchantment !  
Jor has heard, o Dhia, thy prayer !

Open thy window, child, to the Sun !  
Open thy soul to my words !  
Open thy heart to me, child, and hope !  
Thou wouldst die ? I shall cause thee to die  
but I shall cause thee to die kissed by the  
Sun,  
then to the realm eternal I shall lead thee  
where, child, thou shalt be beloved.

\* \* \*

It is regretted that, owing to copyright difficulties, the texts and translations of the excerpts from 'Lodoletta' and 'Fedora' cannot be reprinted.

#### LODOLETTA (1917)

Opera in three acts by Pietro Mascagni (1863-1945): libretto by Gioacchino Forzano, based on Ouida's 'Two Little Wooden Shoes'.

#### Band 5—Ah ritrovarla ! (Act III)

('O, to find her again')

The painter Flammin is giving a New Year's Eve party at his studio in Paris, but he cannot throw himself into the gaiety of his friends and his thoughts return to Lodoletta, the simple Dutch village girl with whom he had fallen in love and then abandoned. He leaves the party and wanders into the dark garden alone, where he sings this aria, full of heartbroken remorse and longing for his forsaken love.

The aria is a string of melodious fragments joined by a sort of running orchestral commentary, Mascagni's idea evidently being to suggest a man rather thinking than speaking, and occasionally voicing his thoughts when they grow too strong to be repressed.



### FEDORA (1898)

Lyric drama in three acts by Umberto Giordano (1867–1948): libretto by Arturo Colautti, based on the drama by Sardou.

#### Band 6—*Amor ti vieta* (Act II)

(‘ Love forbids you not to love ’)

*The opera, a ‘ romantic thriller ’ in a contemporary setting—in which a photograph, a lady-bicyclist, and finally poison slipped into a cup of tea play their part—moves from St. Petersburg, by way of Paris, to Switzerland.*

*Act II is set in Princess Fedora’s house in Paris. She has caused Count Loris to fall in love with her and at the same time plans to have him killed. The Princess tries to resist her own growing love for Loris, but, in this aria, he urges her to yield to an emotion she cannot hide.*

#### Band 7—*Vedi io piango* (Act II)

(‘ Look, I am weeping ’)

*Loris, in exile in France, thinks of his home and the mother he will never see again.*

\* \* \*

### LA BOHÈME (1896)

Opera in four acts by Giacomo Puccini (1858–1924); libretto, after Murger, by Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica.

#### Band 8—*O soave fanciulla* (Act I)

*Nineteenth-century Paris. Rodolfo, a poet, lives a life of poverty with three friends in an attic. Mimi, a poor girl, has come into the room to find Rodolfo alone. They declare their love for each other for the first time, while Rodolfo’s friends wait for him to join them at a café.*

RODOLFO

O soave fanciulla . . . o dolce viso  
di mite circonfuso alba lunar.  
In te, ravviso  
il sogno ch’io vorrei sempre sognar!

RODOLFO

O gentle maiden . . . o sweet face  
haloed in soft white moonlight.  
In you, I recognize  
the dream I would always like to dream!

MIMI

Ah! tu sol comandi, amor!  
Oh! come dolci scendono  
le sue lusinghe al core,  
Tu sol comandi, amor!

MIMI

Ah! You alone command, Love!  
Oh! How gently steals  
his flattery into my heart,  
you alone command, Love!

RODOLFO

Fremon già nell’anima  
le dolcezze estreme . . .  
nel bacio freme amor!

RODOLFO

Already throb in my heart  
the most exquisite joys . . .  
in a kiss glow<sup>s</sup> love!

MIMI *(trying to evade his kiss)*  
No, per pietà!

RODOLFO  
Sei mia!

MIMI  
V'aspettan gli amici.

RODOLFO  
Già mi mandi via?

MIMI  
Vorrei dir . . . ma non oso . . .

RODOLFO  
Di' . . .

MIMI  
Se venissi con voi?

RODOLFO  
Che? Mimi!  
sarebbe così dolce restar qui.  
C'è freddo fuori . . .

MIMI  
Vi starò vicina!

RODOLFO  
E al ritorno?

MIMI  
Curioso!

RODOLFO  
Dammi il braccio, mia piccina.

MIMI  
Obbedisco, signor!

RODOLFO  
Che m'ami di.

MIMI  
Io t'amo!

MIMI e RODOLFO  
Amor!

MIMI  
No, please!

RODOLFO  
You are mine!

MIMI  
Your friends await you.

RODOLFO  
Already you send me away?

MIMI  
I would like to say . . . but I dare not . . .

RODOLFO  
Say it . . .

MIMI  
If I came with you?

RODOLFO  
What? Mimi!  
It would be so pleasant to stay here.  
It's cold outside.

MIMI  
I will stay near you!

RODOLFO  
And when we come back?

MIMI  
Don't be curious!

RODOLFO  
Give me your arm, my little one.

MIMI  
I obey, sir!

RODOLFO  
Say that you love me.

MIMI  
I love you!

MIMI and RODOLFO  
Love!

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Excerpt from “Cavalleria Rusticana”.

#### Translations

##### SIDE ONE

Bands 1, 3, 4, 7, 8 by SILVESTER MAZZARELLA

Bands 2, 5, 6, 9 by ANDREW PORTER

##### SIDE TWO

Bands 1, 2, 3, 8 by SILVESTER MAZZARELLA

Band 4 by ANDREW PORTER

## RECORDING DETAILS

### SIDE ONE

#### “LA GIOCONDA” (*Ponchielli*)

##### Band 1—Enzo Grimaldo (Act I)

Recorded in November 1918 on master number 3331c. First issued on record number 2-054084 (DB 267). With D. ZANI, baritone.

##### Band 2—Cielo e mar (Act II)

Recorded in November 1918 on master number 3324c. First issued on record number 2-052142.

##### Band 3—Deh! non tremar (Act II)

Recorded in October 1918 on master number 3316c (part). First issued on record number 2-054085 (DB 267).

#### “TOSCA” (*Puccini*)

##### Band 4—Recondita armonia (Act I)

##### Band 5—E lucevan le stelle (Act III)

Recorded in October 1918 on master numbers 20255b and 20256b respectively. First issued on record numbers 7-52114 and 7-52115.

#### “MEFISTOFELE” (*Boito*)

##### Band 6—Dai campi, dai prati (Act I)

Recorded in October 1918 on master number 20253b. First issued on record number 7-52110.

##### Band 7—Se tu mi doni (Act I)

Recorded in October 1918 on master number 20257b. First issued on record number 7-52111 (DA 223). With CARLO SCATTOLA, bass.



**Band 8—Rivolgi a me . . . Lontano, lontano (Act III)**

Recorded in October 1918 on master number 3310c. First issued on record number 2-054086 (DB 271). With M. BOSINI, soprano.

**Band 9—Giunto sul passo estremo (Epilogue)**

Recorded in November 1918 on master number 20275b. First issued on record number 7-52112.

SIDE TWO

**"CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA" (Mascagni)**

**Band 1—Mama! quel vino è generoso**

Recorded in December 1919 on master number 1049 aj. First issued on record number 2-052175 (DB 270).

**"LA FAVORITA" (Donizetti)**

**Band 2—Spirto gentil (Act IV)**

Recorded in November 1918 on master number 3325c. First issued on record number 2-052141.

**Band 3—Addio, fuggir mi lascia (Act IV)**

Recorded in October 1918 on master number 3314c. First issued on record number 2-054083 (DB 269). With G. CASAZZA, soprano.

**"IRIS" (Mascagni)**

**Band 4—Apri la tua finestra (Act I)**

Recorded in November 1918 on master number 20270b. First issued on record number 7-52109.

**"LODOLETTA" (Mascagni)**

**Band 5—Ah! ritrovarla nella sua capanna (Act III)**

Recorded in November 1918 on master number 3323c. First issued on record number 2-052143 (DB 270).

**"FEDORA" (Giordano)**

**Band 6—Amor ti vieta (Act II)**

**Band 7—Vedi, io piango (Act II)**

Recorded in December 1919 on master numbers 4233ah and 4234ah respectively. First issued on record numbers 7-52150 (DA 225) and 7-52151 (DA 225).

**"LA BOHEME" (Puccini)**

**Band 8—O soave fanciulla (Act I)**

Recorded in December 1919 on master number 1048aj. First issued on record number 2-054106 (DB 271). With M. ZAMBONI, soprano.

All recorded in Milan, and sung in Italian with orchestral accompaniment.

Transferred to LP in Paris in 1964, on master numbers 2XBA 10003 and 2XBA 10004. First issue of this transfer in October 1964, on record number COLH 146 in the "Great Recordings of the Century" series, in England.



as Enzo in *La Gioconda*



as Osaka in *Iris*



As Faust in *Mefistofele*



as Fernando in *La Favorita*

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as Cavaradossi in *Tosca*



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BRAHMS: Violin Concerto in D (COLH 35)

## CORTOT, THIBAUD, CASALS TRIO

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SCHUBERT: Trio No. 1 in B flat, Op. 99 }  
BEETHOVEN: "Archduke" Trio (COLH 29)  
BRAHMS: Double Concerto } (COLH 75)  
MENDELSSOHN: Trio No. 1 in D minor }

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## PABLO CASALS

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DVORAK: 'Cello Concerto in B minor (COLH 30)

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## SERGE PROKOFIEV

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FRIEDRICH SCHORR  
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## TOTI DAL MONTE, BENIAMINO GIGLI

PUCCINI: Madama Butterfly (complete) (COLH 106-107)

## CANIGLIA, STIGNANI, GIGLI, PINZA

VERDI: Requiem Mass (COLH 108-109)

## LEHMANN, SCHUMANN, OLSZEWSKA, MAYR

STRAUSS: Der Rosenkavalier (abridged) (COLH 110-111)

## LOTTE LEHMANN

Operatic Arias (COLO 112)

## CONCHITA SUPERVIA

Spanish Songs (COLO 113)

## EVA TURNER

Arias from Italian Opera (COLC 114)

## MATTIA BATTISTINI

Operatic Arias (COLH 116)

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(Cond. Bruno Walter)

## MAGGIE TEYTE

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## FRIEDRICH SCHORR

WAGNER: Scenes from "Die Meistersinger" (COLH 137)



The "Great Recordings of the Century" series presents, on long-play records, memorable performances of classic works, recorded before the microgroove era by artists of international reputation. The list has been drawn from the historic European catalogues of "His Master's Voice," Columbia, Pathé and Odeon, subsidiaries of England's Electric and Musical Industries Limited. ★ Each treasured title represents a milestone in phonograph history, a performance which has captured a great artist at the height of his inspiration, interpreting a work closely identified with his name and fame. These re-issues have been brought as close to modern fidelity standards as the skill of sensitive engineers could achieve without altering the original. In recordings such as these, the musical past is reborn, for study, for demonstration, and for pure listening pleasure. Legendary performances are restored to living experiences. The continuity of the art of instrumental and vocal interpretation is assured and a cultural heritage preserved.



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